

PIN Notice

Submission from West Cross Councillors Mark Child and Des Thomas

We welcome the Council's invitation for people to submit ideas on how to make the most of the fantastic promenade we have in Swansea, between the marina and Mumbles Head. It is a great natural asset, and the more people that enjoy it the better. We will focus our comments on the stretch of the promenade in West Cross, and close to it, but we feel many of our comments are applicable for the whole length.

Together we have consistently tried to protect the space between Mumbles Road and the sea in West Cross for the whole period we have represented the ward. The old Council policy of buying up and knocking down all buildings on this stretch was right, and although it became too costly to implement and so fell, the preservation of the character of the journey between Mumbles and Blackpill remained very important; providing unique, prestigious and beautiful views out over the bay, often through trees. Indeed, it is one of the iconic views of Swansea. There is no such things as an individual right to a view, however the public view does have value in planning terms, and this has been re-enforced in various planning appeals over the years. To substantially build on this current open space, which is attractive in its own right and gives access to vistas across the bay to Mumbles, Swansea and beyond would be probably be determined as detrimental to the public enjoyment.

In planning terms we have resisted, with varying degrees of success, all new houses proposed along this area, and virtually all extensions of existing ones so as not to allow encroachment on the open views.

This does not mean we are against any change. We supported the establishment of a skate park, and have supported bulb and tree planting, and been forthright in our condemnation of the wonton vandalism to trees that has sadly occurred occasionally.

- We would support changes that increased the quality of the views, the facilities available to people enjoying the promenade, and actions to increase accessibility and use of this area.
- We could consider widening the path or separating it in to two paths to avoid the occasional clashes between pedestrian and cyclists.
- Sensitive lighting of the promenade would increase its use by walkers, joggers and cyclists in the evening and early morning, particularly in winter. This lighting could be time limited, say come on at 06:00 in the morning and off no later than 00:00t at night. It would be solar powered so requiring no ground works; it could be movement sensitive, so only come on when people are passing. It should also be low level, shining on the path, and not high level lighting up a wider area.
- Other facilities such as a drinking fountain for runners and cyclists, and something for dogs too would be welcome.
- The removal of a number of the proliferation of benches that clutter the front would also be welcome.
- We would consider works of art at strategic positions along the promenade.
- The proposed expansion of skateboarding facilities is very welcome. We supported the original installation. This was not universally popular, but it has proved a very welcome facility, encouraging young people to be active in the open air. Acts of vandalism have been rare and minor, and many have had great enjoyment. The only issue is the limit of the facility causing overflow

occasionally on to the promenade itself. It is past time an expanded skatepark was added, to become a feature and attraction on Swansea Bay.

- Other facilities such as a basketball hoop, a BMX track, sensitively sited, may well be supported too.
- There may also be sites suitable for pop up food, not burger vans, but along the lines of the successful seafood van at Southend.
- Additional tree planting would enhance the area. The most iconic view is through the pine trees towards Mumbles. More pine trees on patches where there are few or none currently would add to the beauty of this area. It is also a concern that many of the trees are of a similar age and so may die at a similar time. With no younger ones being planted, the view may go for future generations. We feel that despite the criminal damage that has occurred to trees, particularly new trees, there is a duty to do all we can to plant so the views are protected, enhanced and expanded.
- The bulb planting adds greatly in the spring and there are areas where this could also be expanded.
- An additional Santander bike site, perhaps near the West Cross Inn would also be welcomed.

Alongside the type of additions and changes we may support, there are others that we are unlikely to support, many of which may also draw significant objections from the local community and some from much wider. As already stated, the seafront along Swansea Bay is a fantastic asset and because of this, it is much valued by many people.

- It would be consistent with previous actions for us to be against selling any land for housing, flats, or any other type of accommodation. This would be denying the public an element of the great views and environment for the benefit of a few very rich people.
- Within the West Cross section is the West Cross Inn and Ripples café and ice-cream parlour, and close by either side are the many restaurants, cafes and pubs in Mumbles, and then the Junction and the Subway at Blackpill. . To build more commercial premises at this point could significantly change the nature of the promenade, to its detriment.
- Parking can be an issue locally, particularly at big events like the Air Show and the Raft Race, which as lead residents of streets adjacent to Mumbles Road request and sometimes acquire restrictions on parking of access. However, we do not believe changing any of this area to car parking is the answer, of anywhere else locally. The answer is not catering for more and more cars, it is for better public transport, cycling, walking, and attempting to reduce car use.

In summary, we agree that the Promenade along Swansea Bay is a fantastic asset for Swansea, its residents and visitors. We agree that there may be many ways that the promenade could be improved to provide greater access, enjoyment and enhance its appearance, and welcome Swansea Council seeking ideas. We have some suggestions for in and around the West Cross section of the promenade, we hope you find useful. We also hope that in recognising it's value, the Council realises the construction of any significant building for whatever purpose in this section would likely be detrimental to this asset.

Cllr Mark Child and Cllr Des Thomas

E Petition Link

https://www.change.org/p/swansea-city-council-save-the-iconic-swansea-bay-gower-for-the-people-to-continue-to-enjoy-before-it-s-gone-8b00edfe-2b1a-43cd-bf63-cbed1e3f2fcc?recruiter=844583114&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=facebook&utm_campaign=share_petition&utm_term=share_petition&recruited_by_id=6944b420-e711-11e7-be19-7df1f70510a3&utm_content=fht-15463525-en-gb%3Av2

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